

Implementation Plan

Introduction

In February 2000, the State Energy Program's (SEP) Strategic Plan for the 21st Century was completed and distributed to the SEP network. The Strategic Plan was developed by a committee comprised of current and former State Energy Office directors, along with U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) SEP managers. The Strategic Plan established three Key Goals that provide a clear focus and conceptual framework for SEP program activities over the next ten years. These goals are:

Key Goal 1: Maximize energy, environmental, and economic (EEE) benefits through increased collaboration at the federal, State, and community level

Key Goal 2: Increase market acceptance of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, practices, and products

Key Goal 3: Use innovative approaches to reach market segments and meet policy goals not typically addressed by market-based solutions

Representing the next stage in the strategic planning process, this Implementation Plan describes the way these Key Goals will be addressed. The implementation effort will involve both DOE and the States working together over the next several years. This Plan outlines DOE's support activities, a set of implementation activities that are recommended for the States, and a projected timeline for implementation.

U.S. Department of Energy's Role

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 - 2002, SEP program activity at DOE Headquarters and in the Regional Offices will focus on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the 21st Century. DOE's role is to assist the States in effectively addressing and meeting the three Key Goals. The following activities are designed to support the States in meeting the Key Goal challenges while also strengthening the State Energy Office network. In FY 2001 - 2002, DOE will:

1. Facilitate collaborative opportunities at all levels.

DOE will encourage and support collaborative efforts at the local, State, and national levels. Linkages between States and local communities are particularly important for increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy use. Communities exercise critical influence on how energy is used; however, the issues that drive communities are more likely to be environmental or economic. States can help communities to attain a healthy environment and sustainable economic development through effective use of energy efficiency and renewable energy. DOE's community outreach efforts continue to evolve, and DOE programs, like Rebuild America, recognize the value of strategic national partnerships to support and influence successful State and community collaboration. Linking States to relevant national organizations, and providing information and technical resources, can better equip them to identify collaborative opportunities, develop partnerships, and leverage resources.

DOE is moving toward an integrated, or "gateway," approach to program delivery, where communities will have a single point of contact to access all program products and services. Pilot programs underway in several Regional Offices offer communities a menu of decision-supporting tools and resources available from DOE, other federal agencies, the States, and private non-profit organizations. This represents a shift from a focus on delivering single government programs to a broader focus on a community's environment, economy, and quality of life. DOE will expand this model to all Regions.

DOE has included a new project category in the SEP Program Notice regarding the FY 2001 Special Project grants, covering Energy and Environment Integration. This section of the Notice requests projects from States which: 1) encourage statewide energy efficiency pilot projects that demonstrate specific environmental benefits; and 2) provide a vehicle for increased collaboration among federal, State, and local government (and non-governmental) energy and environmental organizations. The purpose of this request is to spotlight, through a handful of pilot/demonstration projects, the significant potential to increase program impacts through collaboration.

DOE will also use its federal, national, and regional networks to foster collaboration among States and other federal agencies, national non-profits, and relevant associations. For instance, as a member of the interagency White House Livable Communities Task Force, DOE will identify and promote cross-cutting national policies and federal regulations that will allow States to work in a more integrated manner with other federal agencies. DOE will also look for more opportunities to coordinate with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies to increase the impact of SEP programs.

2. Make Technical Assistance more readily available.

Two things are important in technical assistance: applicability and timeliness. States need to have individualized, focused technical assistance readily available. DOE's access to national laboratory support provides a tremendous resource for technical assistance. SEP can benefit greatly by having access to laboratory experts who can provide guidance and assist States in problem-solving. DOE (Headquarters and Regional Offices) will collaborate with the States to determine the most needed areas of technical assistance. DOE will consult with the appropriate staff at each laboratory to determine the most effective venue of support, and make that support readily available to the States. DOE will work to make laboratory staff available as needed for "real time" technical assistance.

The second area of technical assistance DOE will support is peer exchange and mentoring. Peer exchange has long been an effective element of SEP operations. Through peer exchange, States benefit from the successes and lessons learned in other States and they improve their programs based on those experiences. DOE will also support a more intensive level of peer exchange in the form of mentoring agreements, where States with more experience in certain areas could work with other States over time, including site visits, training, etc. DOE will ensure that annual operating plans consistently allow for increased peer exchange and mentoring opportunities.

3. Develop a web-based information clearinghouse designed specifically for SEP managers.

The State Energy Program does not have a central reference source for SEP-specific information. Information relevant to SEP is mixed with other program information and/or located in many different places. This requires an inordinate amount of time to sift and sort through the various resources. To address this need, DOE will sponsor the development of a web-based clearinghouse dedicated to the State Energy Program.

This clearinghouse will enable States to easily access the latest information relevant to SEP in a broad range of subject areas (policy, program implementation, technical information, funding sources, etc.). It will serve as a fundamental resource where States can direct individuals interested in SEP and related activities. DOE will begin the process by working with State program managers and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) to determine the information and subject areas needed for the clearinghouse.

4. Coordinate a uniform program message for State and national implementation.

As cited in the Strategic Plan, the benefits created through SEP are not widely recognized. SEP has long lacked a clear national identity. NASEO has identified this as a key area of concern for the States. DOE will work with NASEO to develop a campaign that promotes a clear, uniform program message.

By coordinating a campaign, DOE will be able to help States to reach a broader audience and expand their energy efficiency activities. States can spend more time addressing customers' specific needs rather than simply describing their programs. Additionally, DOE will provide basic communications materials to support the program message, such as publications used by State customers, copies of "camera ready" articles and artwork, etc. This will assist the

State when cultivating new partners and resources for projects.

5. Conduct regional training workshops.

DOE will sponsor a series of regional or bi-regional training workshops in the summer of 2001 on a range of topics that will expand the States' opportunities for success. DOE will confer with the States in each region to identify the types of training that would be most valuable to them as they begin to implement the Strategic Plan, and then design each workshop accordingly. The following paragraphs describe several topic areas that may be addressed in these workshops.

In many States, the SEP formula grant funding is a relatively small portion of the total funding potentially available from multiple sources, ranging from local utilities to other federal agency programs. Leveraging dollars is a key component of SEP. Together with the States, DOE will explore the possibilities for a highly flexible approach to using SEP funds to increase States' leveraging capabilities. This might include, for example, ensuring expertise and representation "at the table" in air quality compliance proceedings or utility restructuring debates.

As States address the three Key Goals and undertake new implementation activities, fine-tuned leveraging skills will be pivotal to attract new partners and resources. To assist the States in this challenge, DOE will provide leveraging training on a regional level. Additionally, DOE is prepared to make experts available to the States, particularly in the area of utility restructuring, to enable the State Energy Offices to utilize public benefits funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.

DOE recognizes that State SEP staff (often only one or two individuals) have absorbed activities previously undertaken by numerous staff members. In many instances, training related to strategic planning, goal setting, evaluation techniques, and metrics has not always been available to staff now expected to carry out these functions. To assist the States, DOE will provide training in these areas as part of the planned regional workshops.

6. Complete, as expeditiously as possible, the effort to develop metrics for the State Energy Program.

DOE, NASEO, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory are working together to develop a series of program metrics for SEP to quantify the impacts of State program measures across the nation. The first set of these metrics is now being tested and is expected to be ready for distribution in Spring 2001. DOE will make the metrics effort a high priority, and it will be completed as expeditiously as possible.

Recommended State Activities

As part of this 10-year strategic planning effort, States are encouraged to take a fresh look at their own planning processes and consider ways to refocus State Plans over time to address the three Key Goals. The significant increase in the FY 2001 federal appropriation for SEP formula grants will increase State grants by approximately 13%. This offers an excellent opportunity for States to explore new program measures and address some areas that may not have been possible earlier.

The Key Goals described in the SEP Strategic Plan are broad and conceptual, and many different program activities can contribute to achieving them. Included in this package is an initial set of recommended activities that can contribute to SEP's three Key Goals. This set of activities is not all-inclusive; in fact, it is the first in an ongoing series of recommended activities that will be distributed periodically. Adoption of these activities is not mandatory. The States' ability to creatively develop and implement program measures that meet their own individual needs is a cornerstone of SEP, and these recommended activities do not take away from that flexibility. They are a combination of new ideas and proven program measures that were selected by representatives of State Energy Offices serving on the Implementation Planning Committee. These "top nine" activities, selected from a long list of possible program measures, were considered to have the broadest applicability and greatest potential impact toward achieving SEP's three Key Goals.

The activities are presented in the form of planning guides, called "How To Guides," which go step by step through the process of planning and implementing the particular activity. They are intended to clearly and succinctly provide all the basic information needed: program design, potential partners and how to attract them, resources, possible barriers and the solutions to those barriers, key factors leading to success, and several other elements. Where available, current State examples are included.

The nine implementation activities described in the enclosed "How To Guides" are as follows:

Key Goal 1: Maximize energy, environmental, and economic (EEE) benefits through increased collaboration at the federal, State, and community level

SEP has long recognized the value of forming diverse partnerships to successfully implement programs. States have become skilled in bringing together people and organizations with diverse interests to work together to their mutual benefit. Increased collaboration among energy, environmental, and economic interests can significantly magnify program results, because the three areas are so closely related. Partnerships between the State agencies responsible for these areas can increase operational efficiency, improve customer service, expand the audience reached, as well as increase energy efficiency, environmental, and economic development impacts. States can also work with communities to form similar partnerships to carry out local projects.

The four recommended activities listed below were chosen because they offer natural opportunities for collaboration among energy efficiency, environmental, and economic development interests in major sectors of State and community operations, and because their potential for energy savings and increased alternative energy use is so great.

- Maximize energy savings in school buildings
- Deploy clean transportation technologies
- Quantify the impacts of the energy/environmental businesses in the State
- "Greening" of State buildings

Key Goal 2: Increase market acceptance of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, practices, and products

Market transformation is one of the main activities that SEP has emphasized over the years. The States have engaged in market transformation through a rich variety of activities. States are in a key position to affect market transformation at the community level. Almost everything States do as part of SEP contains some element of market transformation. Thus, effective market transformation remains one of the program's Key Goals for the next decade. The two recommended implementation activities related to this goal were chosen because of the tremendous potential they have to affect the marketplace.

- Maximize energy savings through building standards
- Develop a targeted consumer education campaign using innovative, interactive technologies

Key Goal 3: Use innovative approaches to reach market segments and meet policy goals not typically addressed by market-based solutions

In a deregulated energy marketplace, we cannot depend on market forces to reach all segments of the population. Yet, a stable supply of energy is an absolute necessity. It is projected that market forces will effectively address large industrial and commercial customers. However, smaller consumers such as small businesses, homeowners, small agricultural firms, and low-income consumers are not attractive customer groups. The recommended implementation activities in this section present three different strategies for ensuring the availability of energy services and energy-efficient technologies to these audiences.

- Implement innovative appliance financing programs for low-income consumers
- Access Systems Benefits Charges to support energy programs managed through the State Energy Office
- Aggregate under-served markets into buying pools

Schedule for Implementation

Implementation of the SEP Strategic Plan is an ongoing, interactive, inclusive process with time built in at each major stage for gathering comments and reactions from the SEP network, potential partner organizations, and other stakeholders. The projected schedule through the end of 2002 is as follows:

November 2000

Distribute final Implementation Plan and "How To Guides" to the States.

January - March 2001

DOE provides States with specific information on implementation of DOE support activities, how to access individualized technical assistance, plans for information clearinghouse web site, etc.

Discuss Strategic Plan implementation at Regional Office SEP pre-award meetings.

Assist interested States to integrate Key Goals and How To Guide activities in their FY 2001 State Plans.

Spring 2001

First set of program metrics distributed to the States.

May 2001

FY 2001 Special Project grant awardees are announced.

July 2001

State Plans from interested States reflect Key Goals and recommended implementation activities.

Summer 2001

Regional/Bi-Regional training workshops are held across the country.

October 2001

If needed, reconvene Strategic Plan group to update SEP Strategic Plan.

December 2001

Track successes; identify additional implementation activities. Develop and disseminate additional How To Guides as appropriate (*additional Guides may be developed earlier as time permits*).

Conduct national teleconferences to encourage interaction on State implementation activities, including all groups necessary within each State.

Winter - Spring 2002

Continue discussing Strategic Plan implementation activities at FY 2002 Regional Office pre-award meetings; determine need for additional training/technical assistance.

Continue to work with States to customize and incorporate Strategic Plan implementation activities in their State Plans.

July 2002

FY 2002 State Plans from interested States reflect further integration of goals and recommended implementation activities.

October 2002

Document successes and aggregate for distribution.

Celebrate!!!

December 2002

Identify additional implementation activities; develop and distribute additional "How To Guides."

We would like to recognize the members of the Strategic Plan Implementation Planning Committee for committing the time and energy necessary to develop this Plan. The members are:

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